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TAGS: PREL MARR SP LE AF
SUBJECT: SPAIN: MOD POLICY DIRECTOR ON NCIS/OSI,
AFGHANISTAN, AND LEBANON

Classified By: Charge Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C/NF) Charge paid an introductory call on MOD Secretary General for Policy Admiral Francisco Torrente on September ¶15. Charge told Torrente that the US deeply appreciates the hospitality and use of Spanish bases, as well as the strong foundation that the military-military relationship provides to the overall bilateral relationship. Torrente said that Spain is well aware that it is not the military equal of the US and that, because the relationship is necessarily unequal, Spain appreciates being acknowledged for its basing and other contributions to the defense relationship with close attention to form and public appearances.

¶2. (C/NF) On the NCIS/OSI issue, Torrente emphasized that the GOS doesn't disagree with the DOD concept of force protection and doesn't want to restrict NCIS/OSI activities - it just wants to be involved in these activities from the start. He said that he believes that NCIS/OSI is not carrying out illegal activities, so there would be no reason for the GOS to prohibit any activity. Torrente said that NCIS/OSI is a tricky issue for the GOS, particularly because the press has mixed up NCIS/OSI with the CIA flights issues, and because radical parties that are the governing Socialist party's legislative partners in Parliament can be hard to control. Torrente acknowledged that the US may think that he is being stubborn on this issue, but they have to understand that he represents the GOS position. He said that he is glad that the USG has finally settled on an appropriate interlocutor (NOTE: DASD Dan Fata recently met with Torrente) and that he looks forward to seeing the small changes that OSD will propose to the current negotiating draft.

¶3. (C/NF) In response to Charge's questions about the possibility that Spain could do more to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan, Torrente listed a number of the projects that Spain is working on in the area of its Provincial Reconstruction Team, including road building, paving the runway, distributing radios and broadcasting programs to the local population, and providing medical care. He said that he agreed with General Jones that more troops are needed but said that the ISAF mission can't be accomplished by eight nations alone, so other European countries need to contribute. Torrente agreed with Secretary Rice's call to attack drug production at its roots, noting that it would be a long-term project. He expects Spanish troops to be in Afghanistan for 15-20 years.

¶4. (C/NF) Similarly, Torrente said that Spain expects to be in Lebanon for a long time, and therefore other European allies would need to rotate their troops in to support the UNIFIL mission. He specifically mentioned the Poles and their prior UNIFIL experience. Torrente also mentioned that while UNSCR 1701 is important, it doesn't fully address the issue of Hezbollah, which is both a terrorist organization and part of the government. Torrente also talked about

Spain's engagement with Syria, with whom he said Spain has good relations, and Iran, with which he said that relations were better under previous President Khatami.

LLORENS